

# ***First Steps Family Survey***

## ***Statewide Summary***

### ***2021***

***Total surveys mailed out: 4,881***

***# of Surveys Returned: 912***

4. It was easy to learn about First Steps.

515 (57.16%)	344 (38.18%)	38 (4.22%)	4 (0.44%)
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

5. I received an explanation of the First Steps parental rights from my service coordinator

770 (84.99%)	132 (14.57%)	2 (0.22%)	2 (0.22%)
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

6. I know my First Steps parental rights related to my child's special need

707 (78.29%)	187 (20.71%)	8 (0.89%)	1 (0.11%)
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

7. At First Steps meetings, I am comfortable asking for services and supports that my child and family need.

759 (83.68%)	135 (14.88%)	11 (1.21%)	2 (0.22%)
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

8. I feel I am an active part of the team when we meet to discuss my child.

786 (86.66%)	115 (12.68%)	3 (0.33%)	3 (0.33%)
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

9. My primary provider in First Steps helps me teach my child.

762 (84.11%)	137 (15.12%)	6 (0.66%)	1 (0.11%)
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

10. My First Steps providers work with me to help my child in everyday activities.

742 (81.99%)	147 (16.24%)	15 (1.66%)	1 (0.11%)
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

11. I am able to help my child learn new skills because of First Steps services.

730 (80.75%)	163 (18.03%)	8 (0.88%)	3 (0.33%)
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

12. My First Steps providers are knowledgeable and professional.

788 (87.26%)	108 (11.96%)	5 (0.55%)	2 (0.22%)
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

13. First Steps helps me know how to find and use the services and programs available to my family.

644 (72.12%)	217 (24.30%)	26 (2.91%)	6 (0.67%)
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

14. First Steps helps me know who to contact and what to do when I have questions or concerns.

684 (76.60%)	185 (20.72%)	20 (2.24%)	4 (0.45%)
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

15. Would you like to share your First Steps experience in a newsletter given to families in First Steps?

248 (27.90%)	641 (72.10%)
Yes	No

16. Would you like more information about participating on a First Steps advisory council in your region?

144 (16.29%)	740 (83.71%)
Yes	No

# *Annual First Steps Family Survey Comments 2021*

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*Note: Comments are typed as written on the surveys with the exception of the correction of most misspellings. Names and other personally identifiable information of children, families and providers have been redacted.*

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Our service coordinator was a great advocate to enroll my son in First Steps. She is friendly and eager to support you. Our provider was well educated in motor skills and I could tell that she continued to have an interest in learning more/educate herself. She was nurturing and skilled. Our provider is well educated in speech. She is always ready to be active with our son and teach us in a way that interests him. Our son is excited when she arrives. We are a team and I feel I have new ways of helping my son because of her. Our provider is also always on top of things and someone we can count on.

We love our current provider. She is knowledgeable and helped determine that 30 minute visits are better for our child than 60 minutes. She shares her knowledge about OT and new things she has learned. Our previous PT providers always made us feel like she was comparing our child to her own of the same age. I sometimes felt judged.

The experience with First Steps is great. It is affordable. It is a program that adapts to you and your child's needs. The team is a pleasure to work with.

I love my First Steps team! They all have been so wonderful and such an asset to myself and my child. I'm so grateful for them.

I have had a therapist show up without telling me they were coming. This was the only negative experience. (It happened twice)

Great program! I love our OT and ABA they are Amazing!

Our provider with First Steps has been phenomenal for our son. He loves her, he talks to her and he enjoys her. That's huge because he doesn't talk to hardly anyone. Thank you again to our provider for making this tough time in our lives a lot easier. Recommendation: It would be nice if First Steps offered services to 5 years old instead of having to go through the school.

First Steps is an awesome program it has truly helped our little guy. I thank our doctor every time for leading us in that direction. We are very grateful for the program.

Our First Steps provider is amazing with my children!

Our providers were amazing! We cried after they left the last time. They are both so caring and fun to be around. Thank you to our service coordinator, too! She fought hard for us at our child's IEP/test results meeting so we'd be able to still use our current babysitter the remainder of this school year, while still receiving ECSE services. That meant so much to us! Thanks so much for everything!

I do appreciate First Steps and their guidance on my child's care. They helped me make informed decisions. I hope families can use First Steps and utilize their expertise in child development so they can get their child early intervention. With early intervention you have access to other help that may be of use to you as the child grows. I am thankful of my friendships I have gained as well. I recommend First Steps to anyone.

Our First Steps provider does a great job working with our child and teaching us tools to use at home.

We Love First Steps! Thank you, thank you, thank you!!

Great program. Has helped with closing gaps my son had in early infancy.

I am so happy with your services you all have provided for my child. I am so grateful for you all! I wish you all could go past the age of 3 for services. Thank you!

I am now on my second child in the First Steps program. I was fortunate enough to get the same providers back that we had with our oldest boy (now 5). Everyone works as a team and all are very informative and professional. We love our First Steps family!

Our speech therapist was knowledgeable about our son's delay. However, we do not feel he benefitted from therapy. It was more just monitoring his progress. Also, we were not informed that we could also still participate in Parents as Teachers. We probably would have benefitted more from a development monitoring standpoint. Everyone was so enjoyable and we appreciate the service. Our OT was the most helpful. Just feel he could have used better speech services.

The ladies that my girls have worked with have been delightful and very helpful. They are always willing to listen at my concerns. They have all been here and know the ends and outs of what my child is experiencing. They have been very helpful with ideas and have many resources to help with the issues my children are exhibiting.

The ABA is wonderful and very knowledgeable. She helps with my children's tantrums and praising them, teaching them new skills for coping and learning. Our PT is also knowledgeable and helpful with helping my children strengthen their weakness in their body.

Speech therapists have helped my daughter with speech. She has come very far in the year that First Steps has worked with her. Our OT is great and knows a lot of tricks to help with feeding her. These ladies and will be missed once my girls age out of First Steps.

Our provider is stupendous. We love her and the whole First Steps team. They have been amazing resources and friends to us and our daughter. Can't thank them enough.

We are very grateful to have such a wonderful team of therapists come and help us every week. Not only do they come over and work with my child every week, they offer advice on what we can do the help work on and improve the skills they are teaching my child. They also give us moral support and hope for a brighter future for this little girl. Our providers are an amazing group of people to work with and I don't know what we would have done without them. They are very professional, flexible, and always bring a positive environment when they come over. We are very thankful for them to have come into our lives at this time of need!! I know for a fact we will miss them tremendously when it is time to say goodbye. Our service coordinator has also been very prompt in getting our needs met and keeping everything organized. She schedules meetings in a timely fashion and makes it convenient for me. Even though we don't get to see her on a weekly basis, she is the strong foundation that makes everything we need possible and we are just as grateful to have her on our team as well. This little girl has come a long way in the last year and we owe a huge thanks to the First Steps program. There isn't enough words in the dictionary to express how thankful we are to have them in our lives!!!!

We are so thankful for MO First Steps, our coordinator, & our speech pathologist. From our first contact with the program we have felt supported and encouraged. Our team really advocated for our child to get the services he needed. He didn't qualify the first time and we were encouraged to come back in 3 months if we still felt like we were having troubles. I'm so glad we did! When we started services in August/Sept of 2020, our child only had one word, "down". He was 21 months old and we had never heard him say, momma or daddy. We could tell that he wanted to communicate but all the methods we had tried just seemed to frustrate him more. Our speech therapist is amazing!! First Steps worked with us so we could do our weekly sessions via Zoom, which during the pandemic made us feel so much better. I was worried about trying to do speech therapy with a 21 month old over Zoom, but our provider was a natural with it and it was almost like having her in our living room. Our provider helped my husband and I feel empowered to help our child and provided us with so many easy to use tools and methods. I really appreciated that after each session she would e-mail me her notes so I could review what we had worked on. She helped us with everything from speech to how to handle normal toddler behavior. We are now at 7 months from starting therapy and it is hard to remember how much has changed because our child went from having one word, "down" to now being able to describe his day. It's hard to get him to be quiet now, he's talking so much. I'll never forget hearing him say Momma and Daddy for the first time or the first time I heard him say our provider's name. Thank you Mo First Steps!!

I have an amazing team and am blessed to have them. Thank you!

We could not be happier with this program. MO First Steps therapists helped my child flourish and master life skills that would have been hard for him without their help (such as eating!). Our service coordinator is absolute best. Always available, easy to reach, on top of things, considerate of our work schedule. We have had an amazing experience! MO First Steps made transition to school system easy and seamless. Thank you very much!

First Steps has been so beneficial for my son. We are so thankful for the services he has received from the First Steps program. From his providers to his service coordinators, everyone has been on his side and excited to get him the best possible care for him. I've been so impressed. Thank you!

I am very thankful that First Steps is available for families, especially mine. First Steps has helped my son learn and grow. I love how flexible this program is because I work different days of the week. My son's speech therapist is so amazing and has helped me be able to teach my son to suite his needs with his speech! I love this program so much! My family will forever be grateful for First Steps, we've been truly blessed that this program has been with him for almost three years! Thank you to my son's service coordinator and everyone that's helped him along the way!

Thank you for helping me with our child. This program has been very informative.

First Steps has been amazing and easy to work with. Our provider has made the process painless and thorough!

Where to start: Our child's team have been amazing. They know their stuff. Always professional but down to earth and warm and friendly. They have helped our child reach milestones and go beyond with the skills these ladies are able to provide for him and I. They go beyond any expectations, they sincerely care about our well being and our child's success. I'm so proud to have them helping us. Thank you Ladies!!

Our OT has been wonderful. We're dealing with a variety of issues with our child stemming from premature birth. Our provider has been with us every step of the way and I can't express how much we appreciate her and First Steps.  
Regards and Thanks!

Also, thanks to our providers for their help with his "toe walking".

Our provider is amazing! She is so professional and knowledgeable and she makes the therapy very accessible for me to extend with my daughter between sessions. She helped my daughter excel even in an online-only (family chosen) format for months. My daughter is very shy with most strangers, but she took to our provider (on Zoom in March-April 2020) right away. She loves her provider and we both learn so much from her!

Our First Steps experience began 100% virtually because of COVID. While it was tough at first, I strongly prefer the lessons when we had to lead under the instruction of our therapists. It helped us to learn the tips/tricks and activities ourselves and could easily apply it outside the sessions. Now that sessions are in person at daycare, we are much more disconnected and unaware of our son's progress. I wish there were more regularly scheduled check-ins with parents who do not get to be there for the sessions.

We received services for speech and language with our provider. In person visits were great. She is so easy to connect with and worked well with developing speech sounds with our son while explaining to me what she was doing and what I could do to help him more. When things went virtual she continued doing the same and the progress he made continued however at a slower pace (no fault of hers, but Zoom is not an ideal learning platform for 2 year olds). She was flexible and understanding as we transitioned back to face to face and didn't mind chilly sessions in the back yard. With all the obstacles this year has thrown at us we feel blessed to have had First Steps and our provider with us helping our child develop his skills.

Learned about the program through the NICU social worker. Not sure if we would have known about it otherwise. All therapists we have worked with are very friendly and knowledgeable. They provided lots of information on how to enhance our son's development very pleased with the program and the results.

Our provider has been the greatest blessing for us. She is an incredible First Steps employee and such an amazing woman.

We thank God for our provider. She is so great with our child! She is so supportive and always answers any silly questions or worries I have. Thank you all for Everything. Most of all, we thank our provider!

We have wonderful relationships with our First Steps providers and they have given us the tools and techniques to help our daughter progress and thrive to her full potential. I so appreciate that services are provided in-home. It would be very difficult for our family if we had to drive elsewhere for all of our daughter's therapy appointments. The low monthly fee has also made it possible for my daughter to obtain help from a variety of services First Steps offers.

First Steps is an amazing program for young children that need the extra help to aid toward better development and behavioral skills. They help with a variety of different learning areas such as speech, physical therapy and occupational therapy. I would highly recommend First Steps to any family in need of some "extra" help for their child/children.

My First Steps providers are very knowledgeable in their areas and are very helpful with any questions or concerns I may have.

I would like to thank everyone who has helped us along the way with getting First Steps. And also I would like to thank our First Steps provider for everything she has done for me and my daughter. Thank you.

We love our physical therapist. She is knowledgeable, caring and even includes our older child in activities. She works with us as a family unit as opposed to only focusing on our child requiring therapy. I cannot say enough positive things about her.

My child's therapists have helped him make big changes in his speech. They have given me great tips and advice on how to keep up the learning and activities throughout the week. I can tell they really care about my child and helping get him to where he needs to be!

All of my child's providers have been great and a huge help!

My twins have both been receiving services since August 2020. The team who began working with them effective August/Sep 2020 have been amazing. They stepped up to work with my twins in person which was so important to me. My twins both being nonverbal made virtual therapy difficult to I was thrilled that this new team could help. I can see results and improvements. I am so thankful for the team that works with my daughters.

When we first started First Steps (FS) I was afraid my baby was always going to be behind. However our provider has provided me with knowledge, learning tools and help so that I can make sure Haven catches up to where he needs to be. I am so appreciative that there is a program out there for parents like myself. Thank you!

First Steps has been such a blessing for our family, and has helped our daughter so much. Her team of therapists has also really helped us understand better what is going on with her body and how to best help her. We'll be forever grateful for our SLP and OT. As our Coordinator has been Amazing, too!

I am so thankful for First Steps! My daughter was not responding well to Parents as Teachers educator referred us to First Steps! My child has come such a long way and I am so proud of her! I hope all parents in our shoes would have the opportunity to be involved with your program because it was a lifesaver and felt like we always have someone on our side. Thanks so much from all of us!

Our providers are wonderful assets to the First Steps Team!!

We have absolutely Loved our therapists! We were so fortunate to have the most amazing team who constantly worked hard to push our child to the best of his ability! We will miss them dearly!

Our provider was great, Always patient with our child and cheering her on when she made a goal. Very supportive of me and my husband with our situation of child being our granddaughter we adopted. Our provider is a sweet lady who called and checked up with me to see how things are going. Super sweet ladies we are going to miss them a bunch. Thanks

We love our workers that come out and work with our child. We believe our kiddo has so many skills due to First Steps. Very thankful for this program!

Our First Steps providers has helped me in such a tremendous way from the first day that we had our meeting. Not only has she helped my daughter, she has also helped me to be aware of programs and ideas that will benefit us in the future. She's very punctual, considerate, and I know that she genuinely cares about my family. God Bless her in every way!!

We did an evaluation for my son to see if he could qualify for an IEP when going into preschool. He did not qualify since he is not delayed, so I asked about a 504 plan since he is hearing impaired. The school district didn't think it was required and our service coordinator was inclined to agree with them and encouraged me to trust this. The school, however, is wrong; and thanks to the people at another facility, we will be getting this cleared up. I think it would be helpful for the service coordinators to be more knowledgeable on 504 plans for kids with a diagnosed disability who are entering a public preschool. It would be a shame for other kids to suffer, and I'm shocked that this is the first time this has come up with our school district.

We have had a great experience with First Steps for the past year. Our speech therapist, OT and coordinator work together continually in order to provide us with the best therapy approach for my son. As things evolve and progress/regress with my son's needs, FS has been efficient and eager to change therapy plans as needed. They also apply and provide all the information we need to help my son progress with his therapy.

Our ladies are amazing with our little guy, They all have become part of our family with our son. They truly care about him.

All of my providers help so much with my child and it's wonderful. I'm so happy they are helping her grow and learn.

First Steps has been awesome! We Love our provider. Overall we had a pretty good team. I can't thank them enough.

I love our First Steps Teachers and really appreciate them helping with my child.

Our First Steps providers are Fantastic! The amount of progress my daughter has made is incredible since starting with them. She has made huge strides and we couldn't have done it without their guidance and help. They're patient and kind and my daughter adores them. First Steps made getting my daughter's braces so easy and took care of everything, including financial assistance. They've been a godsend for my family! We love and appreciate them!

Would like to know more services and programs available for his language disorder diagnosis. More programs for when he ages out.

Everyone was very helpful and my son flourished! There were a lot of meetings though.

We had a wonderful experience with our Speech Therapist! She was insightful on a professional level but also gave recommendations outside of her scope that were always appreciated. Our girls warmed up to her so well and look forward to seeing her. She will be greatly missed in our home and we feel lucky to have gotten to work with her. The girls also got to work with a Physical Therapist prior to walking and again towards the end. She was always so kind and patient with the girls. As a mom, that was so encouraging! I appreciated all her direction and tips and think we are lucky to have seen her! Thank you First Steps!

Our child is not severely handicapped enough to really need the First Steps program. I feel like the push to be a part did not really address the possibility that we may not need it.

We had a wonderful service coordinator when we first started but she relocated and we received an inexperienced coordinator next. She often says she has no idea what she's doing. Perhaps more training is necessary.

An online payment option needs to become available. Having to send in a check every month is archaic!!!

This is a wonderful program. My child has made huge strides. It has been great!

We work with several providers. They are all great! Our family has been blessed to see growth in our child due to the support these ladies have given us.

Our therapist has done a fantastic job in teaching us and our child to use verbal skills. He has made incredible progress.

We are very thankful for Physical Therapy. She is wonderful and encouraging and helps us learn how to help our child develop on schedule and he is doing great!

We had an absolutely wonderful experience with First Steps! Between our coordinator, OT, nutritionist and our PT, they have all helped my son thrive! We are very thankful!

Working with First Steps was a less than positive experience. Our Therapist was great, but working with the Service Coordinator and the billing office in regards to insurance and billing was awful. No one could answer a single question and every person had a different answer. The insurance billing process was never clear nor was it explained at all. I would not recommend a single family use this program if they had private insurance. Your time and service would be much better suited with another company.

We work in Jackson County with a service coordinator. She has been incredibly helpful in making sure all the needs of my child is met. We recently had a therapy change, and my group of therapists with the service coordinator all worked together in support of my child's needs. The service coordinator was also really efficient in finding paperwork needed for my child to receive his AFO. Our lead OT and PT are incredibly knowledgeable about their work and accommodating in supporting our needs. Both continuously advocate for my child. I'm really grateful to have a rock star team in support of my child. In areas to grow in, it seems like my region needs a strong access to SLP that meet the needs of younger kids (birth-3). We struggled with our SLP to meet our child's needs. Now that our service coordinator worked hard to find another SLP things are getting better and its only been one session.

My daughter started with outpatient PT services when she was 6 months old. After she still wasn't hitting some milestones and received a couple of diagnosis's, we started with First Steps. I can't imagine where we would be without the comprehensive, phenomenal guidance, support, and help that First Steps has provided thus far.

They've really made great matches on pt/ot. I've always struggled finding speech therapists we click with!

We had a great experience with First Steps. Our provider has been with our family since we brought our son home from the NICU at 2 months old until now/today his 3rd birthday. She helped ease our minds with many surgeries - even going to Dr. appts. With me and has been a part our family. We love our provider, and thankful for all her help.

Pros: Child made progress. Weekly goals set and followed up on. In home vs. outside of home was best for my child.

Cons: Didn't feel data was collected or reported to show progress - more of a "feeling" of progress rather than data to back it up. Initial scheduling once child qualified was a challenge. Provider ran 10-25 minutes late weekly but still ended at set time cutting sessions short.

I can't say enough good things about First Steps and specifically our therapists. They have been integral in my son's development and a great resource for me. Thanks!

Our therapist has been absolutely wonderful to work with and I attribute our son's progress to her knowledgeable services and teaching.

We are so thankful for First Steps! Truly empowered me as a mom to support my daughter and how to help her meet her developmental goals. Thank you!

Thank you to our provider. She is the best and always goes above and beyond to help us!

We can't thank our provider enough our child(ren) are doing so well. They talk now and you can really see how far they have grown thru First Steps!

I would like for First Steps to be more knowledgeable about Autistics. They need to talk to actually Autistic adults to know how ABA can cause PTSD/C-PTSD.

We have been very impressed with First Steps and appreciate everything. Our provider is great and has helped our son so much! Thanks for all you do!

P.S. You REALLY need to get auto draft set up. To my knowledge that is not an option.

My child has made amazing progress through the help of First Steps.

As parents, we are glad we were told about Missouri First Steps. Our son has learned so much through the program. He is improving with his therapy and we are also learning how to help him better. I highly recommend First Steps to any parent that feels his child is behind in speech or development. We are very thankful for this program.

With the help of First Steps my daughter has come a long way! She has met a lot of her goals and is making many more goals! Thank you for your help!

First Steps is absolutely incredible. We are so grateful for the countless ways our son has been helped by each of his therapists and the genuine care and concern they have for him and his progress.

Amazing services.

Amazing staff/providers.

Gave us the support and guidance we needed during a very stressful time of having a child born with issues in which were often unexplainable. They provided us with many resources that helped us and continue to help during uncertain times. Our therapist have become so close to us that we love them like family.

I love what this program has done for my daughter. She is stronger and eager to learn more.

We have absolutely loved knowing our provider! She has been so wonderful and so helpful through this last year and helped our daughter make so much progress with her speech and sensory needs!

My kids have benefited greatly from First Steps services. Without them my 2 year old would not be thriving and meeting/exceeding expectations and milestones! We are beyond thankful for the services and connections we have received/made. Thank you!

This past year has been challenging to say the least and I am beyond impressed with how well the program has adapted to accommodate the pandemic challenges and everyone's needs, while still being positive and up-beat.

This service has been very helpful.

My experience with First Steps was amazing.

They are all amazing. Very caring, genuine, thorough, and knowledgeable.

First Steps has been amazing to my family. We will forever be grateful for the services we receive. Thank you for all that you do!

The First Steps Program has been an awesome resource for my child and I. I hate that my child will soon age out of the program (he turns 3 in July). Our child has greatly benefited from First Steps OT, PT and Speech Therapy. Our service coordinator (I believe she manages the therapists) is a wonderful individual. She is very personable and extremely knowledgeable. Each therapist was an asset to our child's progression in the First Steps Program. The program in my opinion is unmatched and needed to assist children with disabilities and are a bit slower at hitting their developmental milestones. Thank you First Steps!!

Our First Steps provider was wonderful, sweet and professional from the start!

I have had a great experience with First Steps. She providers are awesome, friendly and knowledgeable. My daughter is making great progress and I am certain it is from the things I've learned from them.

My son's physical therapist is incredible. We feel like she is part of the family at this point. She genuinely cares for our son, gives us advice and exercises to do with him. Things that aren't even pertaining to his physical therapy - she guides us in the right direction on how to get answers. He will be having surgery in a couple weeks and is giving us exercises to do with him while he is recovering in the hospital. She is wonderful and deserves all the praise!

Our provider has been an integral part of our child's life since she was placed in our home. Not only has she helped develop skills in our child, she has helped develop skills in us as parents. When our child was placed in our home, she was tiny, underdeveloped, and way below age appropriate goals. Over the last two years, our provider's work with our child has allowed our child to not only make improvements towards being on track developmentally for her age, but as time progresses she even surpasses the goals in place for her. We have already dreaded the time in life our child turns 5 and is old enough for kindergarten, but even more we dread our child turning 3 and our provider no longer coming. Our provider has taught our family so much about teaching our child. She has given us resources for fun things to do for and with our child locally, as we are not from the area. She has celebrated our child's first and second birthdays with her and she has enjoyed the triumph of our child's adoption with us. We get to have 'our provider time' more than we get to visit family. We truly do not know life with our child, without our provider. She has been the Biggest blessing and we could not have been provided with a better First Steps Support. She is truly the best.

Our First Steps provider was awesome with our son and us. I've learned a lot and our son has come a long way. Thank you!

We have two therapy ladies that come to the house and they are absolutely amazing!



My child has benefitted from participating in First Steps. The help, support and resources I've received from my providers have enabled my child to make great progress.

My only complaint is having to send a paper check by mail every month. It seems a little odd to send \$5 monthly, instead of having online payment as an option

My team has been Amazing!

Our child loves the provider from First Steps. Always happy to see her. Doesn't like when she has to leave. Our child has learned a lot of new things since our provider has visited us.

I have nothing but good things to say about First Steps. Always felt supported. Providers were always so good, flexible and knowledgeable. They felt like family for the short time we had them. I am thankful for the program and my daughter made great progress. Would recommend the program to anyone.

Ouyr First Steps providers has been wonderful with our child. I feel like she is part of our family when she comes into our home. She seems to have all the answers to any questions or concerns we may have. The First Steps program has been such a blessing thus far and we look forward to much more time spent in the program!

First Steps and specifically our speech therapist have made such a huge difference in my son's life. Her advice, helpful tips and learning to be a part of his therapy have made more of an impact than any other resource. We are so thankful for these services and the importance of early intervention for my child.

We really appreciate all of our First Steps provider's help. Our child has grown and learned so much. She looks forward to seeing our provider and asks about her throughout the week. Thank you for all your help.

First Steps has been incredibly helpful to our family. We are sad our time in the program will be coming to an end soon!

Our First Steps provider was a great asset in helping our sons get better and learn new skills.

Everyone has been amazing when it has come to getting my kids in the program. The teachers we have are great and my kids love when they come!

We have been using First Steps for two years now with all three of our children. All of the therapists and workers we have worked with have all been a fantastic support for us and we are so lucky to have these services available to us!

We are very thankful for this program. Everyone we worked with were amazing. They helped us through some major hurdles and we will always be thankful for all the time and work you guys have put in. Thanks!

We didn't know about First Steps until our provider called us. But we have enjoyed every minute our child spends with her PT.

Our provider is Awesome!

The transportation forms are time consuming and might be easier if there was an option to fill in total number of trips, by month, by provider. So for each provider there would be one line to fill out (if doing monthly). Just a suggestion.

We highly admire and appreciate our service giver...and want to thank you all for all you do for the community!

The clinicians we hav encountered at First Steps have been excellent! Our First Steps provider has worked wonders with my child and his development. She has taught me many skills that I am able to carry with me throughout my child's life. She has been a huge support emotionally and physically in these last three years. Another provider has been a huge resource for my husband and I and how we are as parents to a child with extra needs. She has helped me cope with things I cannot change and has helped me find myself again in this new role as a mom. Forever grateful for First Steps.

We've loved working with our service coordinator. She's always on top of everything and got us set up with additional services. She consistently checks in to make sure everything is good or if we need to make changes. We've also enjoyed our in home speech therapist. She's worked with both of our boys and she is always kind and caring. Our provider has been amazing throughout our services and the pandemic. She's been flexible with scheduling when things or illnesses have come up and it's been appreciated.

Our First Steps team was amazing! We are forever grateful for their help. We are sad that no further resources area available to us because our child did not qualify for head start program however is still behind in gross motor skills.

Our SLP is amazing! We cannot thank her enough for all she has done for our son.

The team is wonderful and I'm very pleased in the service that was/is given to my premature son. I'm very surprised to see the outcome that my son has overcome. One proud mommy here! Thank you First Steps!

Our First Steps provider is simply the best!!

We are extremely thankful for all that First Steps has doen for our family. We will greatly miss this program.

The therapists did an exceptional job with my son and I'm pleased with the progression he developed while in their care.

When we have had problems, First Steps has listened and reacted which has allowed us to have better success. I wanted to give a compliment to her occupational therapist.

First steps has been really great with our foster son!

Our first steps providers have been such a positive influence in our home! I have learned so much about how to help my son and how to advocate for him. His providers check in on him during hospital stays and truly care about him. This program has been a blessing, I will be sad to graduate from our providers in the fall.

We have an amazing service coordinator. It feels like she's "in your corner" and always advocating for what's best. We also love our speech therapist. She is patient and has great ideas to try out.

I think in person services need to be restarted as they are way more beneficial then meeting virtually. We are considering scaling back our services if they are not in person soon because they are more stressful on our child and family then helpful.

We are so grateful to our First Steps therapists. My son has made amazing strides this past year and has overcome a severe oral aversion thanks to the support and intervention of our therapists and dietitian. They have been amazing and my son loves their visits.

I know know where my family would be without the help of Missouri First Steps. My son's providers care about his development as if he was apart of their family. As my child nears the age out process, I am sad but I know we would not be where we are without the support of First Steps.

Our speech path is amazing - our child has grown exponentially - we still have more ahead but I am in awe of her genius, instincts, and ability to teach/guide us parents. First Steps is Vital to our area's long-term success by investing in our early childhood kids. I am so thankful for you all and the services you provide!

Honestly do not find this service helpful in any way other than the one therapist assigned to my child. One provider is very helpful and without her I would not use First Steps at all. I have repeatedly informed them I am new to the world of Autism with Both of my toddlers being diagnosed. I have made it very clear that I do Not know any thing or any resources out there to help me. We have been involved in First Steps since summer of 2020 and I have yet to receive any information about any thing. I am also frustrated with the length of time it takes to receive any support items. It took close to 8 months for my son's vest and now we are looking at 11 months and still haven;t received my daughter's chewy tubes.

I couldn't possibly name all the skills my daughter has gained thanks to her care team with First Steps. I could go on all day about how great these women are at their jobs. They deserve much recognition.

The two providers we have worked with have been great. One provider had a hard time learning our routine and nap time, but we were able to make things work. I have been very pleased with the help we have received from First Steps.

I understand the challenges with COVID-19 this year have been difficult. However I feel virtual visits were not beneficial for my child, and more progression would have made with in person visits.

We love provider. She is so good with our daughter. She is kind and knowledgeable and an all around great person. Our other provider has a good knowledge base. Another provider is amazing at using our child's regular play to work in therapy.

I do feel like I have to be very assertive about the services I want or want to add. It has been a struggle to get all the things I want for my child. I do love First Steps but I feel like if I didn't know all that I already know about her therapies needed, I might not have been getting enough. I think for children with autism more ABA should be given. Research shows and the APA recommends 20-40 hours of ABA a week. I pushed for the most and she gets 4 hours a week. This is definitely not enough. ABA has helped my daughter a lot. She can talk now and she is learning a lot from her provider who is amazing. I told the team I want to add speech so she can get as much help as possible before she ages out. I was told we can discuss it but basically we don't want her to get too much or she won't qualify for special ed preschool! Well I would love for her to be doing that well.

Everyone has been wonderful!

Thank you very much for the programs and services that you provide! All of our providers/therapist are not only excellent at their jobs, they are also excellent people! It is a pleasure working with them.

I am so grateful for First Steps. My baby's prognosis was grim. He is exceeding his developmental milestones! Thank you to First Steps.

Speech therapist was wonderful! Really helped my child develop the skills he needed to improve his communication.

We love our speech therapist. My son gets excited when she arrives.

At start of program PT was great in helping us help our son meet milestones. He exceeded expectations and was able to discharge from those services before pandemic started. We brought on ST around the holidays and since working with her our child's language and communication skills have really blossomed. We are so grateful for her weekly visits to daycare! Endlessly thankful for this programs resources. Our coordinator has been great as well checking in to make sure all our needs are being met!

The First Steps therapists are angels here on earth. Please keep this program going and find the funds to expand the program so many families need this.

Our First Steps service coordinator along with our service providers (OT & speech) have been absolutely amazing. They have been so pivotal in the growth of our son and his overall progress. We are so thankful to have these services. I can't recommend First Steps enough.



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*Note: Comments are typed as written on the surveys with the exception of the correction of most misspellings. Names and other personally identifiable information of children, families and providers have been redacted.*

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Our service coordinator has been exceptional with setting everything up for our foster baby! Our therapist has been outstanding, helping our little guy learn and teaching us as well. So much respect for all of you! God Bless.

This program is absolutely amazing and we will be forever grateful. If I was a better public speaker I would be shouting its praises in any and every forum.

We had a good overall experience with First Steps. When the pandemic hit, we understood the need to do virtual meetings, however, would have preferred her therapist start seeing her in person again before she aged out of the program.

Our First Steps team has been very supportive. With the pandemic, they all have stepped up and helped us step outside of the box and offer creative solutions.

First Steps is Awesome

Our First Steps team has been extremely helpful and supportive. We highly recommend them to others.

Virtual First Steps due to the pandemic has stunted the progress my child could have made, had there been consistent in person sessions. Our speech therapist seems distracted during virtual sessions such as driving while in session.

Our service coordinator has been absolutely wonderful from the very beginning of this process with our family and my child. My child's speech therapist is very knowledgeable and professional when it comes to her job. My child adores her and loves when she comes over to do speech therapy. Thank you again for everything.

The team of therapists to support my child are amazing. They are knowledgeable, supportive and go above and beyond for my child and my family. With pandemic we moved to virtual therapy seamlessly and there is great effort and care for coordinating of activities. We have been very happy with the program and are sad we are about to age out. Thank you for everything First Steps!

We love our First Steps providers. They have been crucial in helping our child!

Our PT, OT, and RD are an incredible team. My son has made wonderful progress - and it is all because of them!

Our SLP brought a lot of peace of mind in the early months of breastfeeding and helping with bottle acceptance when my son started childcare/I returned to work from maternity leave.

Our provider is extremely knowledgeable and very good at involving me in all decisions made about my son's care.

We would not have survived without my First Steps team. Hands down the biggest blessings!

First Steps has been amazing for not only my son, but my husband and myself too. My son has made fantastic progress with his therapists and has made wonderful bonds with them as well.

Our therapists were professional, kind, patient and informative. As much as they helped my son, they were also incredibly emotionally supportive to me throughout this process. We are heartbroken to be aging out of the program as it has been a gift to every person in my family.

While I am glad to receive services from First Steps, there is a large disconnect between what my child's doctor says should be provided and actually getting the services her doctor is recommending. If we had less money or poorer insurance and were not able to afford an additional 25+ hours per week of therapy then my child would be left behind, as I am sure the children of other clients are. Parents are the primary teachers of their children, but we cannot always match the abilities of a professional. This needs to be addressed when talks of funding come up.

We loved our OT. She was always prepared, engaging, knowledgeable, friendly and happy to see my son. He loved seeing her also. I could text her anytime with questions, ideas or successes. My son made Huge progress with her. We will miss our time with her. I would highly recommend her to anyone that needed a pediatric OT.

First Steps has been wonderful ever since my child left the NICU at such a stressful time, First Steps was easily accessible and manageable. We love our First Steps team.

Virtual speech services have been extremely difficult to engage child. The sessions feel a bit scattered, unorganized, w/ little to no direction or expectations. More of just a parent coaching session.

During the pandemic we were limited to virtual meetings. Although on paper this seems better than nothing, it was very stressful. As parents, we now had to watch our child and try to have a video conference at the same time. Our teachers are great. I just think in the future maybe pre-recorded videos with strategies would be helpful. Thank you.

Our First Steps team has been absolutely phenomenal! I have always felt they were in our families corner, and they have been with us through all of the triumphs and challenges. I don't know what we would do without them!

Like some print off's for sign language to teach child when his/her therapy and special instructor is not here at home service to educate child more things to use in day-to-day progress.

First Steps has been a great program. The kids have really started to take off with learning. Thank you for your services.

Our provider is amazing. She is so good with our son and is very open with us about what to work on with our son to make sure he meets developmental goals.

We have Loved our time with First Steps and are sad that it has come to an end!

My daughter's therapist are amazing. I am so grateful to have them be a part of her medical team. They cheer her on and help put my mind at ease. Their support and encouragement mean a lot.

It would be great to expand the website to help families better understand the program and potentially link to further resources. MOFS was crucial in connecting us to another agency, which has provided superb support! Thank you!

Our First Steps provider has been fantastic to work with and has helped our son out so much! This program is such a blessing.

We adore our therapist and are so grateful for the impact First Steps had in our family.

We love First Steps!

We love our provider - she has been so patient with my child's pace, brings activities that he's interested in, always changes things up when he need her to...she's amazing! We can't thank her enough for the progress our son has made since joining First Steps!

Please have an option for online payment! It's 2021!!

Our team is like a family and I wouldn't have gotten through my child's challenges without them.

I am a foster mom and all 3 of my babies have been served by First Steps. I am always offered the service by clinic, caseworker, etc. I love feeling there is an agency on the lookout to offer special support to these drug exposed babies. And support to me.

We've been extremely impressed with First Steps since moving back to Missouri last year. Our experience with birth to three in another state, where we used to live, wasn't great. The First Steps team in Missouri has continuously exceeded our expectations, and it shows through our son's continued improvement. I can't say enough how grateful we are for all of the help we've received.

I could not be more grateful to our First Steps team! They have been so helpful with my child's development. Seeing my child thrive even with being a micro-preemie is amazing. Again I'm just so grateful this program is available as these were small things I would not have been able to work on because I didn't notice but our therapists did.

I wish I had known about First Steps prior to birth. It's a wonderful program and I would have been so happy to know about it while being pregnant with a genetically different baby. Neither my OB nor pediatrician mentioned it until after birth.

My son was diagnosed with Autism. The specialists, when doing his evaluation, asked why he had not seen a speech pathologist. I said that he does First Steps. They said they should have made sure he saw one. Then, they made a recommendation that our child see a speech path and O.T. through First Steps before he turned 3. I called the coordinator and she stated that my child didn't need those things, and it would be too overwhelming for him. I asked why I hadn't been informed that he had the option of seeing a speech pathologist through First Steps and she said once again that he didn't need it, and it would be overwhelming. First Steps made decisions about my son's care without even consulting me. My family and I are severely offended by what our provider did to us.

Our First Steps provider is Amazing!

I want to add the ST has been amazing for my son. He absolutely adores her. He will miss her when he ages out.

First Steps has been a wonderful program and has helped connect me to services for my child, listened to our needs, and everyone on our team has always been in our corner. I am so thankful for everything!

The ladies that come and work with my son they are excellent. Therapy has done amazing improvement on my child's development. I can't be anymore happier or pleased with the services we are getting.

I'm so thankful for all of the services and providers my daughter has through First Steps. I did find it super confusing at first to even understand what the program was and how in the world we qualified. I still don't feel like we would really understand how the program works or what was available if not for our amazing PT & OT explaining things and suggesting things.

Our provider has been a part of our family for the last three years! She has been there to help guide us to make sure our child is successful today and in the future. Our provider has given us a great foundation for our child's speech. I never felt alone in our son's journey! Now that our child has aged out of First Steps I miss everything our providers did for us. They were/are blessings for our child and our family.

My only issue is the antiquated way to pay for services. We can't use a credit care which means I'm unable to use HSA funds which in 2021 is totally unacceptable. This needs to be fixed.

First Steps is amazing program. I have nothing but wonderful things to say about each and every provider we have. The therapists are so knowledgeable and compassionate. We began our First Steps journey almost immediately after my twins were in NICU. Our PTs, OTs, and speech therapists have become like family. They provided a positive and nurturing atmosphere not only to my kids, but also to my husband and me. Our dietitian was also a crucial piece of our puzzle to ensure my preemie twins thrived and gained weight. We are forever grateful for her advice and expertise. I wasn't aware of vision therapy until it was apparent my daughter had vision deficits. It has been very interesting to learn how much vision affects development and meeting milestones. We are so fortunate vision services were provided so early in our journey. I think it's some of the reason my daughter is doing so well now. Lastly, we had a wonderful service coordinator. She was always available to answer any questions, and always made me feel comfortable with the choices we were making for our family. It was definitely a trying time during COVID, but we got through it, and I feel our therapies were successful thanks to our wonderful First Steps team.

Great program. Wish it serviced to age 5 as IEP for prek then IEP for school age is confusing and causes disruptions of service.

Our child qualified for the First Steps program at birth. For the most part, his development has been on track. However, I feel like his First Steps therapist is constantly looking for something wrong with him to fix. She rarely praises his accomplishments and the milestones he achieves. She encourages us to have him evaluated by other professionals. When they don't have any major recommendations then she jumps back in with more extreme ideas. When we ask other professionals about her suggestions/recommendations, they disagree with her tactics. Our experience has been disappointing and disheartening. We have very little trust in our therapist. Many people rave about the First Steps program, but our experience has been poor from the beginning.

We're so thankful for the services our family has received and the progress our child has made with the help and intervention of First Steps. We've learned and benefited so much from this program.

#6 question I originally marked strongly disagree because my Dr.'s office did not tell me about First Steps when we asked for information on help with my son's feeding. A friend of mine happened to tell me about it. I definitely feel pediatrician office's should promote First Steps as it has been a great service to us!!

Our First Steps provider is amazing and helps learn every time we have a question regarding our foster daughter. She has helped us handle her tantrums and sensory seeking needs and our daughter is thriving. We would be light years behind without our First Steps provider and her continuous support. Kudos!

First Steps evaluated our last child and they saw things that we noticed our oldest son was doing. Because of this our oldest son is now doing therapy to help with retained reflexes.

First Steps has really helped us. Our providers have been wonderful in helping us understand him and he has come so far with all their help. We can't thank them enough. This program is wonderful for kids and parents and even grandparents to help understand things they normally wouldn't and improve over all communication between everyone in the household.

I feel like coaching strategies are not adequately used. I get a lot of recommendations but not any hands on training. I don't feel like goals are directly targets. I'd also like an online payment option.

Our coordinator had been such a wonderful resource to us and made us feel comfortable and informed throughout the process. Our occupational therapist and our speech/language pathologist have been fantastic in working with us for creative solutions to the every day struggles we encounter with our son. Our son really looks forward to them coming to "play" with him and we have seen so much meaningful progress. We feel so blessed to have the support and expertise of First Steps.

My daughter's First Steps providers are absolutely amazing! I truly believe that they helped my daughter's progress tremendously. I don't think she would have come as far as she has in as short of time especially in the middle of a pandemic. Not sure what we would do without them!

Our First Steps providers have been great with our daughter. We are so thankful for their help.

The First Steps team have all been amazing and such a support to our family!

We had an Amazing experience with the First Steps program! Our providers were instrumental in our experience with this program - always helpful, kind and patient in guiding the next steps. She checked in on us often and was available at any time to address questions. Our provider is simply Phenomenal at her role! She was a pleasure to work with. Our child loved her visits and would greet her at the door with visits. She not only helped our child progress, but also me, as a parent. She made me feel comfortable, was non-judgemental, a great listener, and an amazing advocate for our child. I am so sad that our time with this program and the experts has ended, knowing the book is closing, the support, advocacy, and education provided was paramount. However, we know this was the "First Steps" in our journey and must move on. To say Thank You can never be enough! I hope that many other children and families get to experience this program and work with the experts. This experience has been life changing for our family and taught us how to continue to advocate, educate ourselves and continue the foundation that was set up by this program. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

Our provider is sweet and wonderful, she helps me with any questions I may have.

Our therapist is by far the most patient and knowledgeable therapist I have known. She is great with my daughter. Always has amazing tips on how we can work to help improve my daughters speech. My daughter and I are always super comfortable when are doing the speech therapy. Would definitely recommend her to anyone who needs help with their child's needs.

We are so thankful for First Steps and the ways our daughter's therapists have helped to monitor and encourage her proper development. This is such a valuable resource!

I can not say enough good things about First Steps as the list is endless! We are so grateful our doctor informed us of the options we had. From day 1 - our provider has been so helpful with pointing us in the right direction and connecting us with the best option for our son. Our other providers have been so amazing in helping our child - and educating on what we can do at home. The communication with all 3 has been 100%. We are so grateful for First Steps and would recommend it to everyone!! Thank you for Everything!

Thank you so much to service coordinator and Speech Therapist for all you did to help our family!

My only complaint is the time it takes getting the technology. I feel like communication and timings is lacking. (Not from the standpoint of the providers).

My child and I both love our whole team!

Our family has had an amazing experience with First Steps. Our Specialist has been very encouraging, supportive. She has been there just to talk to. Her knowledge and support is simply amazing. We have fostered and adopted our children. Without First Steps I truly believe our daughter wouldn't be reaching milestones and as advanced and healthy. We are blessed by the First Steps program!

This has been a wonderful resource! Thank you!

My son's First Steps team was the absolute best! We are so thankful for the years of services and will advocate for this program forever.

I'm pleased with the support we've received. Our coordinator takes my personal concerns very seriously and worked with me to resolved the conflict.

Our providers were fantastic to work with!

Providers are very relational and very flexible when it comes to schedules. They are doing a great job!

I am very thankful for First Steps help and services.

My child's primary providers are extremely helpful during our meetings. They engage with her in every way possible. They do above and beyond possible services. It is a great program that everyone should be aware of.

Nothing but wonderful things to say about our experiences!

The physical therapist you found for our son is the best! She has helped our son progress in so many ways. She also has an approach to look at the whole child rather than just gross motor skills. I really feel like she has also helped us (parents) learn to be better parents.

First Steps has been a HUGE blessing to our family. My son has grown leaps and bounds with the guidance of our First Steps providers. We can't thank you enough!

I was not satisfied with the service we received. Having us pay for one session (virtual) which we shouldn't be charged was unreasonable. People should (esp. service coordinator) have the authority to check/make changes to the statement or at least give us the right person to contact to dispute unreasonable bill.

Our OT is great! Our coordinator has been absent and blames the pandemic (which I get!) but she is not very professional with we speak. She talks about personal beliefs and political agendas which is uncomfortable. My son qualified for speech and she text me multiple times saying she couldn't find a ST to service him. We waited for almost a month. Our OT ended up reaching out to a ST that worked us into her schedule. It was a frustrating and helpless feeling.

I love this program. Not only has it helped my children but me as a parent.

Just am so appreciative of First Steps and our physical therapist!

I would like to say that I'm so grateful for the whole team! This group of ladies has been so awesome to my child and myself. He has received some of the best care from his team. They have gone above to see that he has everything he needs to succeed. I will truly miss my relationship with my team. They have been like family to me! We have them until July.

We have enjoyed First Steps. It's been a long but easy process. The speech therapist has been amazing! Our child has learned and grown so much in a short time that I believe wouldn't have been possible without her. And our service coordinator has been very helpful! She explains everything so we can be aware of what's going on. She is very organized and on top of everything. Our pediatrician referred us to First Steps and it's been a blessing. We do wish we could have known/heard about it for our older child, who could have benefitted from it as well.

First Steps has been great in our early learning care.

Thanks for this amazing opportunity to learn more about my kid development and areas of improvement. It is a tremendous support!!

We had a wonderful First Steps experience! Our providers were knowledgeable and truly cared about our son/family. Thanks for helping him grow!!

We truly appreciate everything the team did for our son. He has come so far and we learned so much in how to understand his behavior. Thank you for all you do!

Our providers are both wonderful! They truly help with everything I ask them for on our child. Another provider came for the first time April 2nd - she seemed like she will be able to help with a lot of the concerns I have for my child. So thankful for all 3 of them.

I would love to tell someone our story

My husband and I were in an all around unique situation with living in one county and having services done in another county as well as not qualifying the first time at 1 year, 9 months. Our process coordinator is amazing and has been an advocate for our child every step of the way! Our SLP is an angel! She has worked with our child so much! Our child gets excited every time he sees her and his language and communications skills has exploded since he started First Steps and our SLP is a HUGE reasoning behind it! Our providers are absolutely amazing!

I absolutely LOVE our providers. We started initially in 2019, when my son came home from the NICU, and was having issues with motivation to do tummy time. Our providers have had such a positive impact and influence on him and myself, that we've come SO far in 2 years. Despite the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic related shut downs, we were able to make leaps and bounds on our own with the tools and knowledge she gave us. My son loves his provider so much and was SO excited and happy to see her! When his twin sister needed first steps services as well, Our provider was wonderful and gracefully accepted working with her as well! We took on another provider and the kids love her so much as well! Our provider has been SO helpful with helping us in tandem with other providers their encouragement and support helped me make the decision to pursue chiropractic care for my son who had received a prescription for leg braces, as he was struggling to walk at 2 years of age. Their support and encouragement to pursue chiropractic care has helped him GREATLY and he has been more confident, and actually walking around my house instead of constantly crawling! Because of these wonderful ladies, not only will he have to spend less time using braces, we've come so far and I've learned SO much to help my twins catch up developmentally. I am so beyond thankful for these wonderful and kind women, and genuinely think they deserve a raise!!! Please, take note of their fantastic work, they really are a godsend!

We absolutely love our PT and First Steps teacher. They are the best and so supportive!

My family had a wonderful experience with Missouri First Steps. My son has made so much progress with the organization's help. I would like to mention that our provider was an amazing floor time instructor and a great resource! I am forever grateful for the time, progress and resources my son received. It has significantly impacted his foundation for the future.

Our providers are amazing and full of information

I am so thankful for this program it really has helped my son so much

We absolutely love the help we have received from first steps it's made our journey alot smoother and gives us new goals to work on outside of our original goals

First Steps has been one of the best things to happen for our family. We have seen such amazing growth in our child and all of our providers are amazing! They celebrate every win and milestone with us. They always have such great ideas of new and fun things to do to help with our son's development. I have texted about problems or concerns several times and they have all responded quickly wanting to help. Our son has come a long way because of First Steps!

The program was very helpful when it came to getting my son on track. He was born early and had some complications. With prayers, his doctors and First Steps he is 100% healthy. They program is also cost effective and his therapy team is great! I don't believe he needs to continue but I will definitely recommend them to anyone child that has complications.

First Steps has been an integral part of our daughter's development - I feel strongly she wouldn't be where she is today without our PT/OT support.

My child sees many doctors - none of which take the time to speak with one another to better assist my child with what he needs. First Steps has been a breath of fresh air. My child's PT has not only been phenomenal & productive when it comes to my son, she has really helped me navigate our reality of many doctors and given me options to consider when I've felt lost. She has been amazing and we feel very lucky that she was chosen to be on my son's team.

Our First Steps provider has been a blessing to our family. She makes our weekly sessions with her fun for my son. We have seen significant progress since starting with her. She is extremely knowledgeable and is creative in finding ways to help my son get stronger through play. Thank you all for all of your hard work in providing services for our children!

I am very thankful for a program like First Steps. The coordinator, PT, and OT provided became like family and helped my child grow tremendously!

First Steps has made the most incredible difference in our families lives. Our therapists made it possible to find out early that our older child has Autism, and we were able to immediately get services to address his needs. They are now working with my younger son and helping to address his needs. It's quite amazing to see so much growth every week! Even though they no longer work with big brother, they still ask about him and still give advice when asked. I cannot thank their therapists enough for giving my children their voices. I will always recommend First Steps to friends and family. From the very beginning with our amazing service coordinator, to the end with phasing out, First Steps is the most amazing group I've ever worked with.

At times, when multiple providers are present at the same time, they can get off task and start chatting about their days, other children (not by name) and sporting events. I understand that they are "at work" and this may be "water cooler talk" but I know with only an hour getting off topic isn't productive. Also, I wish there was a debrief at the end with "This is what my goals for X child were today" and what the take-aways were. Sometimes I feel that they don't necessarily show up with a plan and just do whatever my child's preferred activity is (which is not necessarily associated with their therapy area." I do feel like one on one is better - we have had several sessions like this and the provider shows up with an activity and can't rely on another provider to "lead" while they stay back and perhaps are not as involved.

I wouldn't be as successful at managing my daughters care without First Steps. I appreciate Every person on her care team. Thanks guys!

We really appreciate everything our First Steps providers do and did for us. We were very happy for this program when we needed it. Thank you for all your hard work and effort.

First Steps have been a great program and child are doing so good. This has been a great help to children.

Our First Steps providers have been absolutely wonderful. They've blessed our family so much, and we are grateful for the passion they put into their work. Thank you!

I am very pleased with the first steps program. Everyone that I've met since my family has gotten involved has been extremely helpful and caring. I look forward to visits with our therapists and learn so many positive and effective ways to work and play with my daughter. I have seen tremendous amounts of progress in my daughter and myself as well. I feel very blessed to have first steps in our lives.



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I have been so pleased with the services my child has received. First Steps has helped support our family needs and given practical strategies I can use in our daily routine. Thank you!

First Steps and our providers made such an impact for our family. We will be forever grateful.

We have loved first steps and all the providers, but I guess because of COVID and we do not get to be there during his sessions the communication has been lacking.

Shireen is our speech therapist and she has been beyond amazing! She includes my older child to help with Collin as well. She's so great.

Our experience with First Steps was pleasant. When we noticed my son's delay, we were confused about what to do. I think our service coordinator did an excellent job in explaining all the options and navigating us through this situation with her valuable advice. We are now more confident about where to look for additional resources/support. I thank all the personnel involved with First Steps.

Our daughters therapist is amazing!!

It will be easier to have an online method of payment

This program it's so helpful.

Everyone at First Step is nice and friendly. I came to First Steps because I was concern that my child had sensory disorder. I'm still confused that they really didn't formally do an assessment (maybe it doesn't exist) on whether she does or does not but they started therapy nevertheless. I think my child had fun and still benefited from interacting with all the therapists but I would have liked to know that she didn't have sensory issues from the start.

I am very grateful for this program. All of our providers and service coordinator have helped our entire family work through issues and my child loves them all so much.

First Steps has been a blessing to our family and I am so thankful for the entire team that puts effort into helping all of our families and children!

This program is incredible and has helped my children so much. It also has helped me be a better advocate for my children!

The First Steps program has been an incredible part of my family's healing process. Our boys were born at 26 weeks with significant delays and medical issues. Our coordinator, PT, OT and ST all deeply care about the health and well-being of my family. They consistently come up with creative ideas to keep my boys interested in development and connected to their environment. This program is the reason my children are doing so well. Thank you so very much!

I self referred my child to First Steps as the hospital where I delivered, the pediatrician's office and the specialist/surgeon my child seen were not aware of the qualification criteria. Because of his diagnosis he was an automatic qualifier without the half-age delay. We were constantly being told by our primary service provider that he needed to be removed from services or that he wasn't as "severe" as other children on her caseload. When we would ask for services or advocate for services we were provided no resources or guidance. We had to find our own way to the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services CYSHCN Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs Program. But it was too late to be able to use the services to help pay for my son's surgery. This is a program that First Steps Service Coordinators should be aware of and prepared to refer a family to that is like mine and does not qualify for Medicaid and is private pay. Many of our services and access to services were based around the providers schedule and availability and not what worked for our family despite our extreme flexibility during his time with First Steps. We were also forced to use only one provider in our area (DCO) Developmental Center of the Ozarks despite a wealth of other providers being available for my son's needs. We hit a point of extreme frustration in Spring/Summer 2020 because our primary service provider wanted to discontinue services despite my son struggling to communicate. She stated that she was closing our case and that our family was "misusing state funding". Our family was not utilizing any type of state funding. Our family chose to continue with only service coordination and sought a second opinion from our primary service provider (speech therapist). With this we found another First Steps service provider but we were told we were not allowed to use the provider. We were forced to pay out of pocket for 6 months of intensive outpatient Speech and Occupational therapy services that required us to travel and miss work because First Steps in our area would not allow us to use this provider and assist with the cost and access to service. For 2021 we were permitted to use a Specialized Instructor after advocating for my child and begging for the service. But again we were told it was up to the provider's schedule and availability despite others having openings. When we started the transition process our Service Coordinator was not forthcoming with our options, did not tell us about the Regional Office, nor did she tell us that our son could have a service coordinator until age 6 with the Regional Office. We had to continue to advocate for ourselves and be given partial or misinformation regarding access to services. Additionally, in 2018 there was a breach of confidentiality in the First Steps office where a staff accessed my son's PHI to retaliate based on my employment. When I presented my concerns to my service coordinator and other staff I was told unless I disclosed the employees name, relation to my work and details about the breach they would do nothing further to protect his records. I was unable to disclose that information as I would be responsible for committing a similar act by disclosing the name and manner in which I knew that person. I hope that there has been efforts to better protect records so that any staff cannot access records without password, lock or tracking history for record access. At that time I considered ending our services but wanted to help my son get the best start in life and with his disability. As a community professional I have been disappointed and embarrassed at my personal experience with First Steps. My hope is that other families do not experience the things that we have.

We love our coordinator! She has made the whole First Steps process easy to understand and stress free. We also love our primary provider! She always has new ideas for PT, OT, Feeding, Speech, and vision therapy. She is always up for a messy play day to help with my First Steps kiddo, as well as her typical twin sister. We have only seen our CCVI vision provider once in person (twice via zoom) and she is great as well! She gave us a mini-lite box to use, as well as many ideas to help my daughter navigate in her environment and to help her learn easier. First Steps has been a great addition to my daughter's weekly physical therapy and occupational therapy appointments.

It would be nice if there was a way to pay other than via check by mail.



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*Note: Comments are typed as written on the surveys with the exception of the correction of most misspellings. Names and other personally identifiable information of children, families and providers have been redacted.*

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Our service coordinator has been with my child since she was 3 months old. She has been a huge blessing to our family. My child learns new skills monthly because of her!

I have had three Therapist from First Steps. My experience with my child's first PT therapist was not good. I am currently working with one provider and I have seen my child make drastic improvements. My child has also been receiving OT therapy and she is absolutely fabulous. She has been working with my child since she began receiving services and I have seen great improvements in her development.

Everything about our experience was fantastic. From our PT to our case manager! Absolute top notch!

We are so appreciative of the First Steps resource - thank you.